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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the impact of a public service advertising campaign conducted for Recruiting New Teachers, Inc (RNT). The study surveyed a national sample of 2,750 individuals who called the RNT toll-free number mentioned in public service advertising and returned information about their educational background and teaching interests. The campaign seemed to attract a higher proportion of women and minorities in its later phases compared to its initial phases. A total of 29 percent of the respondents were minorities. Three-quarters of respondents said that the RNT advertisements excited them about teaching. Most respondents were drawn to teaching because of intrinsically driven motivations. Eighty-four percent of respondents reported feeling motivated to pursue the course of becoming teachers. Response to the RNT campaign was analyzed in terms of percentages of respondents who have become employed as teachers, have been accepted into teacher education institutions, have applied to teacher education institutions, and other categories. The study also analyzed respondents' contacts with state or local departments of education and teacher education institutions; attitudes toward the teacher education process; experience with teacher placement; experience on the job; attitudes toward hiring minority teachers; preferences about specific teaching assignments; salary expectations; and tenure. (JDD)

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Recruiting New Teachers Campaign Response 1988-1992

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

Prepared for

RECRUITING NEW TEACHERS, INC.

February 1993

Conducted by

LH RESEARCH

Study Director: Louis Harris

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Word About This Study

This document summarizes findings from the second study to evaluate the impact of the public service advertising campaign of Recruiting New Teachers, Inc. ("RNT"). The first, conducted in 1990, surveyed a representative national sample of the initial 77,478 members of the RNT recruitment database (i.e., individuals who had not only called the 1-800-45-TEACH number in the group's PSA's, but had also returned information on their educational background and teaching interests, signaling a continuing interest in teaching).

Now, two years later, the campaign is four years old. The total number of calls to the toll-free number has increased from 370,000 to 687,793 (as of September 1992), breaking all response records in the 50-year history of the Advertising Council's public service campaigns.

As of September 1992, 29% of all callers (196,468) had returned the RNT response cards they received after calling the toll-free number. The sample for the current survey was randomly drawn from the database of 196,468 respondents, with each individual having an equal chance of being selected.

In all, 2,750 RNT respondents were interviewed. From the 1988-89 list of RNT respondents, 1,000 interviews were conducted, comparable to the 1,250 in the first RNT study conducted in 1990. This allows direct comparison of the current results for that group with those from the 1990 study. Another 1,000 were drawn

from the 1990-91 list, while a final 750 were drawn at random from the 1991-92 list.

A comparison of the three respondent groups which make up this current study is revealing:

COMPARISON OF THE 1988-89,
1990-91, AND 1991-92 RNT RESPONDENTS
BY KEY DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS

	Total	'88-89	'90-91	'91-92
	%	%	%	%
Men	43	49	40	39
Women	57	51	60	61
White	71	73	73	65
Black	18	17	16	22
Hispanic	7	6	7	9
Asian	2	2	2	1
Native American	1	1	1	1
Other	2	1	1	2
High school or less	6	4	7	9
Some college	24	19	28	27
Four-year college	40	43	38	37
Post graduate	30	34	27	27

At present, the campaign seems to be attracting a higher proportion of both women and minorities than in its initial phases. The decline in the number who have a four-year or postgraduate college degree, of course, is to be expected: the earlier group has had three to four years to upgrade their educational status.

This report examines in some detail RNT's success in reaching African-Americans and Hispanics -- a goal that has been a high priority for the campaign since its inception.

Not an Ordinary Lot

The Recruiting New Teachers advertising campaign is not only unique in the history of public service advertising -- having broken all records for individual responses to Advertising Council ads -- but it has attracted a unique group of people who want to join the ranks of elementary and secondary school teachers.

Only 10% of the teachers in elementary and secondary schools in the United States today are minorities. Yet 29% of the respondents to the RNT campaign are minorities -- nearly three times the number of minority teachers currently teaching and more than three times the number of minority teachers who are hired each year to teach. The pool of minority teacher aspirants which RNT is generating may well be the single most significant contribution of the entire effort.

The campaign has also attracted a disproportionately large number of males. They make up 43% of the RNT respondents, but only 31% of the total teacher force today.

The education credentials of those who sent in cards also are impressive. As was true of the initial 1988-89 group, just under two-thirds of the 1990-91 and 1991-92 groups had already earned a four-year college degree, while 27% had a postgraduate degree. At the outset of the RNT campaign, there was speculation that a predominantly television-oriented advertising campaign might simply attract the curious who were neither qualified to become teachers, nor serious enough to want to obtain the

education to qualify. This concern has been put to rest.

These aspiring teachers are a dedicated lot. About half (47%) said they had been thinking about entering the profession for a long time. RNT simply crystallized that latent desire and helped them channel their efforts. One in eight thought RNT would find them a teaching job, an equal number said they wanted to change from their current career to one in teaching, and 7% were former teachers who wanted to return to teaching but in a more challenging setting.

Over 8 in 10 of these RNT respondents can be said to be drawn to teaching because of intrinsically driven motivations. They are convinced they "would make a good teacher," want "to do something for the good of others," feel "the future of the country depends on education," say "the prospect of working with young people excites me," are drawn to teaching because they are "interested in the intellectual challenges of teaching generally or teaching a specific discipline," and feel "people like myself are badly needed in schools as teachers."

Fully 84% of these respondents want to stay the course and do what it takes to become teachers.

Correspondingly, only 13% reported giving up their previous interest in becoming a teacher. Reasons cited by this group include: "another career change got my attention more than teaching;" "discouraged about finding a job as a teacher in this market;" "can't take the time or money to get trained as a teacher;" "discouraged by the bad conditions of teaching in the

schools with overcrowding, drugs, and worried over safety;" concern that "the teaching profession just doesn't pay well enough;" and "teachers are not treated as professionals." However, these comments are in sharp contrast with the vast majority who reflect a deep determination to enter the teaching profession.

A Bottom Line on the RNT Campaign

How far has the RNT 1988-1992 respondent group come in its quest to join the teaching profession? The numbers are startling: 25% are considering applying to teacher education, 16% have applied to teacher education institutions, 12% have been accepted into these institutions, 9% have finished their preparation and are awaiting certification as teachers, 36% have applied for a teaching job, 20% have been employed as teachers, 6% have taught but have been laid off, and 17% are no longer interested in teaching as a career. These numbers add to more than 100%, because there are redundancies in the number who applied to institutions and have since been accepted, and in the number who have applied for teaching jobs and have since accepted positions.

However, the 20% who are now teaching and the 6% who taught but have been laid off are not duplicative, attesting to the significance of RNT's candidate pool. The 20% who are currently teaching amounts to 39,294 individuals. To put this figure in context, estimates of the U.S. National Center for Education Statistics and the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, suggest that

5.9% of the estimated 2,740,000 elementary and secondary school teachers are hired each year, coming to approximately 162,000 new hires annually. This means that over a four-year period -- the length of time that RNT has been in operation -- an estimated 648,000 teachers have been hired. The nearly 40,000 who have been associated with the RNT program are therefore equivalent to 6% of all new teachers hired over the four-year period.[1]

However, when the actual teachers on the job are augmented by the six percent (11,788) who took teaching positions but were subsequently laid off, the total number of teachers affiliated with the RNT program comes to 51,081.[2] Such a figure represents 8% of the estimated total of all teachers hired over the four-year period.

Among the RNT respondents who are minorities (29%), the yields are even more dramatic. Based on the Department of Education and BLS data, it is estimated that 16,200 minority teachers are hired each year nationally by elementary and secondary schools, or approximately 10% of the total new teacher hires.

Altogether, 56,976 minority individuals have responded to the RNT ad campaign and follow-up (by September 1992). Of that total, 18% (or 10,256 individuals) have become employed as

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[1]Of this group, the vast majority (85 percent) had no teaching background before contacting RNT. Fifteen percent had either taught previously and were seeking to re-enter the profession, or were current teachers seeking new opportunities in the field.

[2] Many teachers are hired on a "last hired, first fired" basis, making all new teachers vulnerable to lay off in a recession. Of course an unknown fraction of this group might have been laid off for other reasons, as well.

teachers over the four-year period. Compare this to the estimated 8,500-9,000 minority people who obtain degrees in education each year, or approximately 35,000 over four years. It means that for every four new minority graduates with a degree in education, RNT is helping at least one minority person enter the teaching profession and secure a position.

More significant is that the 10,256 associated with the RNT program represent 15.8% of the estimated 64,800 minority teachers hired over the past four years. In addition to the 10,256 minority individuals in RNT's database who have become teachers, another 2,849 (5%) took teaching positions but were laid off. This totals 13,105 minority group people who have joined the U.S. teaching workforce, and represents 20.2% of all minority people hired as teachers in the past four years. Clearly, RNT's campaign has played a significant role in expanding minority participation in teaching in the United States.

RNT's Impact on Campaign Respondents

From the beginning, Recruiting New Teachers has never laid claim to exclusive credit for the ultimate placement of its respondents as teachers. Indeed, the goal of the organization has been to empower individuals to take the next step on a pathway to the profession on their own. It must be emphasized that while the advertising, print materials, and the follow-up experience with the RNT partner network (of state and local education agencies, colleges, universities and other organizations involved in teacher education and placement) is, no

doubt, helpful, other elements that are not part of RNT are also part of the mix.[3]

Survey data do indicate, however, that the RNT campaign has had a palpable impact on its respondents' decision to pursue the teaching profession. A substantial 75% of all RNT respondents said that the ad "got me excited about teaching." By 58-37%, a majority also felt that the ad "raised my hopes that I could really become a teacher." And, by 84-15%, a vast majority gave priority to the need for "more ads and information such as that run by Recruiting New Teachers." Consistently, black and Hispanic RNT respondents were 10 to 20 points higher than others in crediting the ads with getting them involved in the process of teaching.

Coping With the Process of Becoming a Teacher

Once an individual has returned a card to RNT, the next step is to provide the resource information that respondent needs in order to take further action. In all, 60% reported having contact with either a state or local department of education, a teacher education institution, or an organization concerned with placing teachers. A total of 50% say they initiated the contact themselves; the remaining 10% were contacted by one of RNT's institutional recruitment partners.

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[3]Perhaps the greatest of these factors is the determination and commitment of the individuals themselves. As is noted later in this Summary, while 10% said they were contacted by RNT partners, 50% more contacted partners and similar organizations on their own. RNT can only claim partial credit for this complex decision-making, but the generally high level of activity underscores the deep interest in teaching that appears to mark most respondents to the RNT campaign.

RNT respondents who were in contact with an agency or university generally felt positive about that experience. The 74% who were in contact with a college or university rated that institution positive by 78-21% in terms of being "helpful." The 26% who were in contact with a state department of education rated the helpfulness of that institution positive by 57-42%. The 23% who contacted a local school district gave a 59-38% positive rating to their helpfulness.

The Experience of Obtaining Teacher Education

The study also asked respondents to describe their experiences at different points in the teacher recruitment "pipeline." The reaction to the teacher education received was by and large positive. Those who enrolled in teacher education programs were highly positive about the information on the programs, services, and faculty given them, as well as their treatment in the application process, and on information these institutions provided about licensure and certification. A slightly fewer 45% felt positive about information received regarding teaching fields and geographic areas of high demand, but almost half were critical of information received (49% negative), and a near equal percentage scored the availability and adequacy of financial aid (48% negative).

The Experience of Getting Placed As a Teacher

Among the RNT respondents who are now actively pursuing teaching careers, 27% are certified and teaching full-time, 21% are certified but not yet employed, 12% have earned a degree and

are awaiting certification, 9% work as substitute (not full-time) teachers, 2% have work as teachers' aides, and 26% are not yet fully educated and certified.

A total of 38% of this group are currently working in education: 27% as full-time certified teachers, 9% as substitute teachers, and 2% as teachers' aides. But 71% of them are in categories which put them virtually in the pool of actual teachers. In fact, 7 in 10 have actually applied for jobs, with 61% applying to public schools, 6% to nonsectarian private schools, and 3% to parochial schools.

Taken together, these statistics reflect the impressive and broadscale involvement of RNT respondents (including a major proportion of people of color) in the mainstream of teacher recruitment today.

The school recruitment process itself receives relatively high marks: by 64-30% positive about the clarity of the procedures for applying for a job, by 60-21% positive about the quality of the interview they had, by 58-32% positive about the overall treatment of their application, and by 54-35% positive about the information provided about the district, its schools, and the school they might teach in. However, respondents are negative by 44-43% on being provided the criteria used by districts to select successful applicants.

Notably, minorities were roughly 20 points more positive about every phase of the recruitment process than others. This marked difference could be the result of either lower

expectations on their part, or increased awareness of the need to recruit minorities on the part of the recruiters, who may have made special efforts when dealing with people of color. It could be partly both.

RNT Teachers' Experience on the Job

Forty-three percent of RNT teachers work in urban schools, 28% in suburban schools, and 27% in rural schools. The public schools have employed 79%, nonsectarian private schools 13%, and parochial schools 6%. But 90% of the current teachers would be happy to work in public schools, 24% in private Catholic schools, 25% in private non-Catholic religious schools, and 25% in private non-sectarian schools. By grade level, 12% are teaching in pre-K or kindergarten, 32% in the first through fifth grades, 23% in the sixth through eighth grades, and 25% in the ninth through twelfth grades. Men tend to teach the higher grades and women the lower grades.

Those who are currently teaching appear to be a highly satisfied group; 65% said they were "very satisfied," 25% "somewhat satisfied," and only 4% "not very satisfied." Thus, by 90-5%, these teachers are satisfied, despite reservations about their pay, the relative insecurity they feel working at a time of widespread cut-backs, and their desire (reflected in their call to RNT) to obtain even more challenging assignments.

Key Environmental Elements at Work

The RNT respondents who are interested in pursuing careers in teaching were asked an extensive series of questions dealing with important issues that can affect their careers in teaching. These ranged from the need for minority teachers to strategies for recruiting better teachers, from improving the quality of education to the types of teaching assignments preferred, and from areas of teaching desired to their salary aspirations and how long they intend to stay in the profession.

Hiring Minority Teachers

By 80-17%, most of these aspiring teachers said they felt hiring minority teachers was important. However, when asked their assessment of how various groups welcome the hiring of competent minority teachers, fewer teachers credit white principals, white teachers and recruiters with welcoming minority teachers. And, while 62% thought that minority parents very much welcome hiring minority teachers, no more than 19% said the same about white parents. Minority respondents were even more pessimistic about white parents welcoming them as teachers.

It is clear that there is an underlying sense among these RNT respondents that the hiring of more minority teachers may face some resistance, especially by white parents in schools which are predominantly populated by white students. This perception may be one reason there has been no real increase in the hiring of minority teachers, despite the fact that the number of minority students in elementary and secondary schools is

rising.

By 85-14%, a majority would like to see more male teachers hired, a sign that current gender imbalances are of real concern to future practitioners.

An Agenda for Attracting More Good Teachers

A sizable 88% felt that not enough is being done to attract "the best and the brightest people into the teaching profession."

Good-sized majorities believe that improved status and respect for teachers should be the top national priority, followed by giving teachers more say in school decision-making, making available more scholarship money for students in teacher education programs, providing better working conditions for teachers, and building more rigorous teacher education programs.

Respondents were presented with a list of proposed reforms in education and were asked to choose the one with the most potential for improving education. Sharing first place, with 25% each, are: cutting the bureaucracy to allow individual schools to make their own decisions, and giving all children access to high quality pre-school experiences and pre-natal health programs. In last place on the list, and advocated by only 8% as a priority, was providing choice for parents in the schools their children might attend.

Desirable Places to Teach

While at first glance it appears that teachers want to teach only in areas that are similar to their own places of residence, that is not the complete picture. It is true that many suburban

residents prefer teaching in middle income suburban schools, rural and small town residents in rural and small town schools, and urban residents in urban schools; but dramatic differences emerge by race. For example, 45% of white respondents vs. 29% of black respondents would find teaching in middle class suburban schools very desirable; however, teaching in economically and ethnically mixed urban schools would be very desirable to 63% of Hispanics, 59% of blacks, and only 36% of whites. Rural settings would be very desirable to 54% of whites, 49% of Hispanics and 31% of blacks. And, teaching in schools serving disadvantaged students would be very desirable to 41% of Hispanics, to an even higher 56% of blacks, but to only 29% of whites.

Significantly, these numbers shoot up when certain enabling conditions are offered. The survey asked respondents what incentives would increase their willingness to teach in disadvantaged schools. The following answers are in rank order:

-- 83% of those who found at least one of the four settings undesirable said that "smaller classes to teach effectively" would very much encourage them to change their minds.

-- 73% said that they could be persuaded to teach in such settings if there were "signs that real attention is being paid to solving social problems children face."

--72% would change their thinking about the desirability of a setting if there were "a good support network for new teachers."

-- 63% would take a relatively unattractive assignment if "student loan forgiveness and scholarship programs" were in the offing.

-- Another 63% would be "encouraged very much" to change their mind about a setting if "special training to meet the needs of disadvantaged children in a multicultural classroom" was instituted.

-- 61% might be persuaded to change their minds if there were "enhanced professional development opportunities."

-- 51% said that "supplementary or cost of living pay" would make a real difference in changing their mind about an unattractive teaching opportunity.

These findings clearly underscore an urgent agenda for relevant incentives and teacher preparation to better prepare students to deal with multi-cultural classroom environments; otherwise, it will be difficult to counter a self-selection bias that perpetuates race and class divisions.

Preferences About Specific Teaching Assignments

These aspiring teachers want to teach in a broad spectrum of grades: 9% in pre-school, 44% in kindergarten-elementary schools, 39% middle or junior high school, and 47% in senior high school.

By subject matter, social studies is the most popular (36%), followed by English (28%), math (25%), reading (25%), science (24%), special education (21%), art/music (17%), computer science (16%), ESL (16%), and physical education (14%). The ability of the campaign to attract individuals with interests in teaching in

shortage areas such as science, math and special education is notable, as is the substantial number of aspirants interested in fields of current oversupply, such as social studies and English.

Salary Expectations

Respondents salary expectations were fairly realistic:

-- "A fair salary for the first five years as a teacher" is $25,600, they believe.

-- "A fair salary at the peak of your career as a teacher" is $43,200.

-- "The salary you would expect to make at the peak of your career" is a lower $38,000.

The gap between what they expect to earn at their peak and what they believe a teacher should receive may reflect RNT respondents' recognition of the difficult job market for teachers today. Certainly, both figures indicate a realism about salary issues that underscore these respondents' intrinsic motivations for their career choice.

Expected Tenure as a Teacher

Currently, average length of service for teachers in elementary and secondary schools is 12.4 years. Among RNT's respondents, only 3% say they want to teach for less than five years, 11% for five to ten years, 14% for 10 to 20 years, and 66% "for the rest of my life." A similar but slightly lower 63% of RNT teachers predict that they will be teaching for the remainder of their working lives.

When asked what might persuade them to leave teaching within

10 years, the two dominant reasons were moving to other jobs in the education field and finding better paying jobs outside of the profession.

FINAL OBSERVATION

It is difficult to draw simple conclusions from a survey of such length and complexity (mirroring, as it does, equally complex aspects of the career decision-making process itself). Nevertheless, some clear-cut results can be drawn.

Embarked upon as an experimental innovation, RNT has demonstrated an unimagined power and efficacy. Simply put, its broad-based national recruitment strategies have pioneered new methods for catalyzing interest in the profession of teaching, and have real relevance to other fields, as well.

Obviously, the campaign has differential impact on the individuals in its database. For many it may be little more than a background effect, one factor in a multi-faceted process of career decision-making that would likely take place regardless of RNT's efforts. But for a significant number of respondents, particularly minorities, the campaign is having a remarkable impact. Moreover, for both groups, this survey shines a powerful spotlight on motivations, aspirations and experiences on pathways to the profession, providing a powerful tool for RNT's campaign planners and for policy-makers alike.

In a short period of time, RNT's campaign appears to have successfully captured and assisted a remarkably large pool of

prospective teacher candidates -- and a well-qualified pool, if their success in finding classroom placements is any indication. But, ultimately, rather than providing a summative verdict on RNT's efforts, this survey indicates a continuing agenda for the campaign: to build on the substantial foundation of its previous efforts, and help foster more coherent and effective procedures for creating the capable, diverse and committed teacher workforce the nation demands.